

Texas Fund for Geography Education Advisory Committee  
July 29, 2003 Meeting Minutes

The meeting was held at the Coordinating Board offices. In attendance were:

1. James Kracht, PhD, Associate Dean, College of Education and Human Development, Texas A&M University (Convening Chair).
2. Patricia Hardy, Social Studies Supervisor, Weatherford ISD.
3. Dagoberto Ramirez, Pre K - 12 Social Studies Coordinator, La Joya ISD, Mission, Texas.
4. Mary Black, PhD, Assistant Professor, Dept. of Curriculum & Instruction University of Texas at Austin.
5. William Brown, PhD, Visiting Professor, Geography Department, Texas Southern University.
6. George Rislov, Director, Social Studies, Texas Education Agency.
7. Lanny Proffer (ex-officio), National Geographic Society.
8. Jeff Phelps (ex-officio), THECB. The meeting was convened at 2:00 p.m.
9. Attending via conference call was Margaret Price, PhD, Assistant Professor, College of Education, Texas Tech University.

In accordance with the education code and the state statute, the committee is to be comprised of seven (7) persons who have expertise and interest in geography education. The commissioner has appointed Dr. Kracht, Ms. Hardy, Mr. Ramirez, Dr. Black, Dr. Price, Dr. Brown, and Mr. Rislov to be on the fund committee.

Jeff Phelps and Lanny Proffer briefed the committee on the structure and value of the fund available for distribution. The National Geographic Society ("Society") maintains the body of the account. The payout is determined by a foundation of the Society and the payout percentage is 5.25%. The value of the fund has declined slightly due to the poor economy.

Several documents provided by the Society were distributed to the committee. The first document dealt with payout information for the program year of 2003/2004. Since last year's payout was never spent, it will roll over into the current year. Both last year's and this year's payout are now available.

The second document is year-end 2002 information related to net asset value of the fund. Beginning with the 2002 report the Society will no longer show a "negative" net asset value. The original contributions to the fund are categorized as permanently restricted, so the Society is transferring funds from the Foundation's unrestricted account in order to cover the loss due to down earnings. This temporary "loan" will also cover grants made from the fund. The Foundation Board is still in favor of a 5.25% payout annually, with the hope that the investment markets will recover and will soon reflect positive returns. The total amount available for distribution this year is \$104,861.

The third document is the fund information as of year-end 2001, and, as you will see, because of the negative earnings the net asset value dropped below the value of the original contributions.

The committee discussed the use of the funds, which are to support geography education within the state and to improve geography literacy. The grants may be awarded to Texas public or private institutions of higher education, but must involve a collaborative effort within a K-12 environment. The overall purpose of this committee is to develop standards that will be incorporated into a Request for Proposals (RFP), review completed applications based on the RFP, and to make recommendations for awards to the Society. The RFP will be issued under the auspices of the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board.

Discussion on the RFP included the following:

- The timing of issuing the proposal needed to be improved. The last issuance was during the Thanksgiving and Christmas holidays and the resulting response was limited.
- Better communication needs to occur with potential respondents. Mr. Proffer will be contacting the Alliance directly. Dr. Kracht and Mr. Rislov will review some of their mailing lists and, if appropriate, these may be used to circulate notice of the RFP.
- The proposals must define the collaborative effort between the institution of higher education and a K-12 partner. The committee wanted clarification on who the K-12 partners could be and it was agreed that an expanded definition would be included. It was agreed that a fairly loose definition of partner would be considered.
- Focus is on geography education within the K-12 environment. This can involve services provided to students and/or K-12 teachers.
- The proposals shall not include any indirect / overhead costs.
- Conflict of interest was discussed and it was agreed that members of the committee would not participate in the development of a proposal submitted for consideration.
- The award criteria were discussed and the committee agreed that it was adequate.
- The committee may question the amount requested under any proposal as to adequacy and may make adjustments to the amount awarded.
- Ideally, 75 days would be allowed for responses to the proposal.
- The projects are to be completed within a year of the award.
- There is not a requirement of matching / in-kind funding to be provided by the institution of higher education, but there are a small number of points awarded for such.
- The proposals should be primarily for providing services and not for purchasing goods and equipment.

The proposed time table for issuing the RFP and making the awards is as follows:

- 8/1/03 – RFP is issued and published in the Texas Register.

- 10/15/03 – Deadline for submitting proposals. Proposals will be submitted in writing and electronically.
- 10/15/-03 to 11/3/03 – Committee reviews and scores proposals, and makes recommendations to Society.
- 11/11/03 - Society makes awards.
- 11/18/03 – Award letters are sent.

The need for an additional meeting was discussed and it was agreed that one would be held if necessary. Absent the need for another meeting to discuss the recommendations, the scoring would be sent to Mr. Phelps for final tabulation. Mr. Phelps will inform the group of the final results. Once concurrence is received the Society will be informed.

The workgroup adjourned at 4:00 p.m.